

and much needed ethical revival. Some of the events that have aided in my political education include TARS meeting, the advocacy workshop, Advanced Placement (AP) Government class, and AP macroeconomics class. Because of the truth that the republican principles hold I have firmly established them into my own life.

One of the most politically education functions I have ever participated in was the Advocacy workshop, which took place in our state capital Sacramento. This was a TARS function supported by the charitable Federated Republican Women of Valley Center. During this trip I not only got to meet some powerful political leaders in today's world, but was also taught some key issues that separate us as republicans. For instance, I discovered why we hold to our economic ideals though the whole scandal that involved Gray Davis, electricity and our horrendous deficit here in California. At this point I began to see that Republicans have great solutions for our state and nation's numerous problems. At the conclusion of this trip I took advantage of the opportunity to tell the whole Valley Center Federated Republican Women's group what I had learned and how it had impacted my life. This was a clear milestone in the maturing of my political life. I was acting like a Republican not only by standing up and publicly proclaiming what I had learned about the GOP, but also what I now believe.

I have earned the reputation of an accomplished scholar at VCHS by taking the hardest courses and excelling in them. AP government and AP Macroeconomics are the two current classes of mine that deal with politics. In these classes there is much debate about heated political issues, and this is another part of my life that reveals my sincerity to the republican values. I am known by my peers to thrive in this kind of environment not only because I know what I believe in as a republican, but also because I have a vehement passion to prove it right. I have revealed my opinion in class on countless issues. Some of these issues have dealt with fiscal policy, the role of our government bureaucracy, the office of the President, war and abortion. Not once has my view been contrary to that of the GOP, I am a proud member of the Republican Party!

Next year I will be attending a California University. These days Californian schools tend to be incredibly liberal. We've seen this in the news through 'war protests' and 'pro-choice rallies'. As a right-wing Republican it will be quite a task attending college. But I will persevere despite the obstacles in my path because of how deeply rooted the values are in my life."

THE SAVE SOCIAL SECURITY
FIRST ACT

HON. PATRICK J. KENNEDY

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 25, 2003

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of a bill that will correct the mistake that the House made last week when it voted to repeal the estate tax. Not only that, but the Save Social Security First Act will also restore some credibility to the commitment that both parties in this House have made to safeguarding the Social Security trust fund.

In March of 2001, Speaker Hastert said, "We are going to wall off Social Security trust funds." Two years later, our fiscal stability has eroded and we are racing towards half-trillion dollar annual deficits. Rather than protecting it, we are now dipping into the Social Security trust fund to finance another round of tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires. The wealthy few in our country are benefitting at the expense of the millions of seniors who currently rely on Social Security and the millions of American workers who will rely on it in the future.

The question is a simple one, Mr. Speaker. Would you rather add an additional \$588 billion to the Social Security trust fund over the next 20 years, or give that money to families whose wealth already dwarfs the lifetime earnings of many Americans? The answer seems obvious. I believe that this House should keep its promise to protect Social Security and stop sacrificing the needs of the vast majority of Americans for the benefit of the privileged few. It is for these reasons that I have introduced the Save Social Security First Act.

The act will accelerate estate tax relief while not entirely repealing the tax. It raises the exemption amount to \$3 million per person, or \$6 million per couple, beginning in 2004, and dedicates all estate tax revenue to the Social Security trust fund. Many of those who voted to repeal the estate tax last week argued that the tax unjustly forces small business owners to sell their business in order to pay the tax rather than be able to pass the business on to the next generation. According to a Treasury Department study, however, this is very rarely the case. In only 1.6 percent of taxable estates did a family-owned business comprise at least half of the value of the estate, and that was with an exemption just one-fifth of what is proposed by the bill I have introduced. We do not need to fully repeal the tax in order to keep it from unfairly impacting small businesses.

Under the Save Social Security First Act, only the truly wealthy will remain subject to the estate tax, while 99.5 percent of families will be exempt from it. The whole country will benefit from the \$588 billion that this bill will put into Social Security over the next 20 years. Over the next 75 years, it will make up for almost one quarter of the projected shortfall in Social Security funding.

Mr. Speaker, it's about time that we got our priorities straight. This bill says that even if you feel that fully repealing the estate tax is a priority, it is not a higher priority than ensuring the solvency of Social Security. It says that we should be committed to the growing number of seniors in our country. It says that we should be committed to today's workers who are depending on Social Security for their retirement. And it says that we should be committed to our children, who should not be forced to foot the bill of our fiscal irresponsibility.

I strongly urge this House to join me in supporting the Save Social Security First Act. We have two futures to choose from: on the one hand, we can make a tiny sliver of the wealthiest people in the country even wealthier. On the other, we can help save a program that will benefit untold millions of Americans for generations to come. This should be one of the easiest choices that we have made in a long time, and I hope to see my colleagues on both sides of the aisle join me to support this important bill.

JAMES ETTER HONORED BY THE
SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 25, 2003

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I want to share with our colleagues that Mr. James Etter has been selected by the Small Business Administration, SBA, as a Virginia Small Business and Business Advocate Award winner, and named the Veteran Small Business Advocate of the Year for 2003. Mr. Etter is founder/chancellor of American Public University in Manassas, VA, and was also a winner at the regional level, receiving the Region III SBA award. SBA's Region III includes the States of Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia. As the Region III winner, Mr. Etter is one of only 10 Veteran's Advocate winners in the Nation.

Mr. Etter, a retired U.S. Marine Corps officer, founded the university in 1991 to find innovative ways to empower veterans and active duty military, by providing educational opportunities. The university courses are delivered exclusively through distance learning. Before distance learning was an everyday concept, James Etter developed a way for veterans and active duty military stationed abroad or locked into rigid schedules to work toward their undergraduate or master of arts degrees. From an initial enrollment of 18 students, American Public University has grown to over 10,000 registered students, of which approximately 70 percent are active and reserve duty military. The nearly 600 faculty, 76 percent of whom are veterans, provide instruction and mentoring to students from all 50 States and 30 countries. I have been told that the university maintains the most expansive military studies, strategy and history curriculum in the world. Continuing education, through the flexibility of distance learning, affords veterans and active duty military the foundation they need to become entrepreneurs.

Virginia's SBA Award winners were honored at an Awards Gala in May that also celebrated the Small Business Administration's Richmond District Office's 50th Anniversary. Mr. Etter was nominated for the award by Linda Decker, who serves as president and CEO of the Flory Small Business Center in Manassas. She also serves as the chairman of the Virginia Small Business Awards Foundation.

Other winners included: Virginia Small Business Persons of the Year—Sharon Bennett, Founder & CEO and Evan Wooton, President, Premier Pet Products, LLC, Richmond; Runners Up for Small Business Person of the Year—Maxanne Taverniti, Williamsburg Group Tour Service, Williamsburg and James Cheng, President, Computer & Hi-Tech Management, Inc., Virginia Beach; Small Business Accountant Advocate of the Year—Elizabeth Moore, Partner, Goodman & Company, LLP, Newport News; Small Business Exporter of the Year—Marti Moreninos, Universal Companies, Inc., Bristol; Financial Services Advocate of the Year—Teresa Walker, Vice President and Senior Community Development Officer, Wachovia Corporation, Roanoke; Small Business Journalist of the Year—Mary Flachsenhaar, Inside Business, Norfolk; Minority Small Business Advocate of the Year—Dr.